

Instead of imposing our values on others, we have sought to promote a system of government, democracy, that empowers people to choose their own destinies according to their own values and aspirations. We have sought to keep our markets open, because we believe a strong world economy benefits our own workers and businesses as well as the people of the world who are selling to us. I hope that we have been and will continue to be good partners with the rest of you in the new millennium.

Not long ago, I went to a refugee camp in Macedonia. The people I met there, children and adults alike, had suffered horrible, horrible abuses. But they had never given up hope because they believed that there is an international community that stood for their dignity and their freedom. I want to make sure that 20 or 50 or 100 years from now, people everywhere will still believe that about our United Nations.

So let us resolve in the bright dawn of this new millennium to bring an era in which our desire to create will overwhelm our capacity to destroy. If we do that, then through the United Nations and farsighted leaders, humanity finally can live up to its name.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. in the Assembly Hall. In his remarks, he referred to United Nations General Assembly President Theo-Ben Gurirab; United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan in New York City

September 21, 1999

Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished leaders: Tomorrow we will be exactly 100 days away from the beginning of the new millennium. The calendar tells us how old the world is, but we are thinking about something fresh, something new. And it is altogether fitting that we should be here at the United Nations, which is a very young attempt by the world to make ourselves better and to make our children's future brighter.

I would like to say how deeply pleased I am that the United Nations is being led today by a man of the ability and character of the Secretary-General. He continues to speak and act with authority. He said recently that the aim of the U.N. Charter is to protect individual human beings, not to protect those who abuse them. He reminded us that even in these times of phenomenal prosperity, half of all humanity subsists on less than \$3 a day.

So, Mr. Secretary-General, I thank you for your leadership and your direction.

Let me say that I'm thinking, myself, also a lot about the future. And I plan to be, at least part of the time, a future resident of New York. Now, when I move here, I will be able to complain about all the traffic jams around the U.N.—[laughter]—and all those important people who keep me from getting to my appointed rounds. If I get very upset, I may even write a letter to my United States Senator. [Laughter]

But let me say, again, in all candor, the United States is humbled and honored to host the United Nations. We are honored to be a part of your leadership for peace in East Timor and in so many other places. And we look forward to going into a new century, to a new millennium, to a new era, with your leadership.

Ladies and gentlemen, I ask you to join me in a toast to the Secretary-General and the United Nations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:42 p.m. in the North Delegates Lounge at the United Nations. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-General Annan. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement Honoring the National Medal of the Arts and National Humanities Medal Recipients

September 21, 1999

This year's recipients of the 1999 National Medal of the Arts and National Humanities Medal stand at the pinnacle of American artistic and academic achievement. Through their ideas, their scholarship, and their works of art, they have opened all our eyes to the